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News Release

Commissioner Dwight D. Jones Details Anticipated Timelines For Conversion To New Standards, New Statewide Assessments

Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones today sent the following update to Colorado superintendents and school district leadership about the anticipated schedule for full implementation of statewide academic standards and for deployment of a new statewide assessment:

Revised State Standards & New Upcoming Assessments (CAP4K/S.B. 08-212)

Colorado's education system has recently gone through a lot of change and advances. The focus is now a pointed series of signals about getting students postsecondary and workforce ready. Revised state standards and new, upcoming assessments are a few examples of the significant adaptations toward this end. Based on this new goal, both the standards and assessment system must have relevance for students, provide ongoing feedback for students and teachers, and measure annual progress toward postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Now is the time to capitalize on all we know. We know to expect more and different things from our students. We know how to leverage technologies to more quickly and better understand student progress. National grants and strategic partnerships right now provide opportunities for advanced feedback tools. Most everyone talks of how an assessment system needs to be less punitive and more helpful and informative.

Rather than waiting for national agendas or other special interests, Gov. Ritter and the legislature through Senate Bill 08-212 paved the way for Colorado to lead our own assessment revision process just as we revised our academic standards. The expectations we have for what students must know and be able to demonstrate are new and different. As a result, we must take a responsible approach to making this important transition.

What follows are information briefs, as well as a timeline, to help districts and their administrations plan strategically for the change to a new Colorado summative assessment.

What We Know For Sure—Standards

- The Colorado State Board of Education adopted the new Colorado Academic Standards in December 2009.
- Districts are required by statute to adopt standards that meet or exceed the new academic standards by December 2011.
- Colorado's new standards may be modified slightly this summer if new national (not federal) common core standards in English/language arts and mathematics indicate improvements to Colorado's new standards.
- The state board and education stakeholders across the state believe that Colorado's new standards, format, design and grade placement in mathematics and English/language arts are the right ones. Rumors that these content area standards will be jettisoned for the nation ones are, simply, wrong.
- Thus far, the common core drafts appear to be noticeably similar to Colorado's new standards.
- By June, Colorado expects to have final, public drafts of the national common core standards for both mathematics and English/language arts for a third-party review.
- If the state board notices concepts of interest which are absent from the common core or are more rigorous than Colorado's new standards, subcommittee members from Colorado's standards revision process will be consulted for their input and review. All districts will be notified of input opportunities as soon as the third-party crosswalk reviews are completed. During the summer, the state board will consider any improvements to Colorado's new standards related to the common core.
- While the choice to adopt the common core remains with the state board, benefits for aligning with the common core include comparison to and shared conversations with a majority of

- states, as well as the ability to leverage national resources and materials.
- USDE requires states applying for Race to the Top funds to adopt the common core.
 - The state board will consider/adopt line-edit changes at the end of summer 2010.

What We Know For Sure—Assessments

- CSAP is still here ... for now.
- Last week, the legislature voted to extend the timeline for the implementation of the summative and school readiness assessments "until fiscally practicable." Postsecondary and workforce readiness assessments must be implemented in two years after the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education adopt the design.
- While the legislature considered changes to the CAP4K/S.B. 08-212 legislation (to end high school testing, do away with the writing assessment, and advance the implementation of the postsecondary and workforce readiness assessment), these alterations were not passed.
- CDE's Assessment Stakeholder Advisory Board and its five work subcommittees (Summative, Formative/Interim, Special Populations, Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness and Early School Readiness) will recommend to CDE the specifications for a new assessment system by November 2010.
- Specifications for the early school readiness, formative, interim and summative assessments (for grade three – high school) will be adopted by the state board in December 2010.
- Together the state board and commission on higher education will adopt the terms and specifications of a postsecondary and workforce readiness assessment, including how the assessment will be given, by December 2010.
- Colorado is a member of two national assessment grant partnerships – Smarter Balanced, and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career. Colorado intentionally joined both consortia in order to learn from and influence national assessment conversations and development, and to leverage possible future tools, such as computer-based testing, which will best serve Colorado's students.
- National assessments will not include tools for early school readiness or science content.
- National ARRA assessment grants will fund the development of assessment tools; each state is responsible for funding its

adaptation, implementation, scoring, professional development and reporting associated with these tests.

- The development of national assessment(s) will be complete and available for Colorado's use by 2014-2015.

How We Get To Where We're Going

We are quickly moving forward to begin assessing student progress toward being ready for life after high school graduation. The transition will be gradual in order to help students and teachers understand the new expectations of both knowledge and skill demonstration and for corresponding special populations assessments.

There will be no changes to the 2011 spring assessment. Since assessments are developed 18 months prior to implementation, the 2011 CSAP is already finalized.

The transition begins with 2012's spring summative test, which will assess only new standards and use only aligned and relevant items from the CSAP. This will ensure students receive no "surprises," but instead are assessed with a familiar testing process.

The 2013 spring summative test will introduce a revised state assessment that draws from existing CSAP items aligned to the new standards, as well as new items developed or purchased to cover additional content within the standards. (A new contract will be in place with a vendor employed to develop and deliver the new state summative assessment.)

In spring 2014, students will take the new state summative assessment.

The following summarizes this timeline:

- 2010-2011 School Year
 - Old Standards: Colorado Model Content Standards
 - Old Assessment: CSAP
- 2011-2012 School Year
 - New Standards: Colorado Academic Standards
 - Modified Assessment: CSAP assessment items which align to the new Colorado Academic Standards only
- 2012-2013 School Year
 - New Standards: Colorado Academic Standards

- Modified Assessment again: CSAP assessment items which align to the Colorado Academic Standards and new assessment items.
- 2013-2014 School Year
 - New Standards: Colorado Academic Standards
 - New Assessment: New summative assessment

In Closing

At long last, Colorado is revising what it has for so many years indicated needed to be changed, and it is the department's intent to assist districts, schools, teachers and students through a transition that is both intentional and thoughtful. We trust this information will help reduce the anxiety and performance shifts that often occur during systems change.

As always, thank you for your interest in and support of Colorado's efforts to reform, transform and improve public education and provide the best possible opportunities for all students.

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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